

Members

Sen. James Merritt, Chairperson
Sen. Phil Boots
Sen. Richard Young
Sen. James Lewis
Rep. Robert Bischoff, Vice-Chairperson
Rep. Kreg Battles
Rep. William Ruppel
Rep. Phyllis Pond



STATE FAIR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Legislative Services Agency
200 West Washington Street, Suite 301
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2789
Tel: (317) 233-0696 Fax: (317) 232-2554

LSA Staff:

Susan Montgomery, Attorney for the Committee
Bernadette Bartlett, Fiscal Analyst for the Committee

Authority: IC 15-1-1.5-4

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: August 27, 2008
Meeting Time: 10 A.M.
Meeting Place: Board Room of the Administration Building, Indiana State Fairgrounds, 1202 E. 38th Street
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 1

Members Present: Sen. James Merritt, Chairperson; Sen. Phil Boots; Sen. Richard Young; Sen. James Lewis; Rep. Robert Bischoff, Vice-Chairperson; Rep. Kreg Battles; Rep. William Ruppel; Rep. Phyllis Pond.

Members Absent: None.

Chairperson Merritt called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. Introductions were made of the members of the Committee and the staff of the Legislative Services Agency. Senator Jean Breaux also was in attendance.

1. Preliminary Report of the 2008 Indiana State Fair

Executive Director Cindy Hoyer of the Indiana State Fair furnished the Committee with the Preliminary-After Action Report-August 26, 2008 (Exhibit A). She credited the Fair's success partly to the exemplary weather and spoke of the myriad of compliments from Fair

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

guests. Attendance was up over 100,000 from 2007 and per capita spending also was up. Guests stayed longer at the Fair since the weather was pleasant; many patrons took "staycations" and traveled closer to home. The use of free admission coupons from the Indianapolis Star was up and a record was set for the highest attendance on a Friday.

When the Fair goes to expanded days in 2009, there may still be conflict with some school districts' beginning dates. The balloon race will be on the first Saturday next year, rather than the opening day and truck and tractor pulls will be the first day of the Fair. Director Hoye raved about the new covered bridge on the west side to the Fairgrounds. It was constructed with donated trees, cut on site. At that exhibit, money was collected to rebuild Moscow, Indiana's, covered bridge, destroyed by a tornado in the spring. A discussion ensued concerning the headliner entertainment at the Fair, the costs of the acts, and the revenue generated from guests viewing the entertainment. Free entertainment still is located throughout the Fairgrounds. This year there were designated smoking stations and certain areas were designated as smoke-free. David Ellis was introduced as the new Financial Director of the Fair, but it is too soon after the Fair's end to give a financial report for 2008. Director Hoye stated that all preliminary data shows that the Fair made budget, although livestock exhibits were down, presumably due to the cost of transporting the animals. (A copy of the presentation made to the Committee is attached as Exhibit B.)

Chairperson Merritt commented on an article in the Indianapolis Star concerning the roof on the Exposition Hall. Director Hoye told the Committee that the HVAC system will be replaced and the flat roof rebuilt in order to make its care easier for maintenance staff. In answer to Representative Pond, Director Hoye spoke about improvements to the 4-H dormitories. A discussion then ensued regarding parking issues. Guests can park at Glendale Mall, where a shuttle leaves every 20 minutes, and over 20,000 people rode the Fair Train. Parking space is rented during the Fair from the Indiana School for the Deaf. The Fair Train also will be used for Oktoberfest over Labor Day. Director Hoye reminded the Committee that the safety of the guests at the Fairgrounds is the highest priority and commended the Indianapolis Metro Police Department and the Indiana State Police for their great collaboration with the Fair.

2. Report from the Center for Agricultural Heritage and Science (The Barn)

Justin Armstrong, Barn Director, told the Committee of the move of the Normandy Barn across the street to placement on the Fairgrounds, which cost about \$1,000,000, including new utility hook-ups, new pad, and new sidewalks. At the Fair, over 14,500 children took the "WonderTrail". The Barn has had over 2,300 students involved in its educational programs this year, and is full for the fall. Over 24 classes have been turned away. The Barn is having infrastructure set up for distance learning so that classes can be taught across the country and internationally. There has been great interest in agricultural programming and environmental programming is taught also. Revenue is about on track as budgeted and 2/3 of the revenue comes in during the fall from the school groups. The Barn recently has received donations of about \$133,000 in cash besides in-kind contributions. In 2006, the Barn revived its quarterly magazine (Exhibit C). Representative Pond suggested that it might be possible to solicit donations from seed and tree seedling companies and Director Armstrong responded that the Red Gold tomato company is donating seeds for the greenhouse at The Barn. The Future Farmers of America members will help with the plants and will build raised beds for them. Hopefully, the greenhouse can be hardwired and the students can see, by electronic means, their plants growing.

3. Other Business

Representative Ruppel voiced his concern that the school year in many districts starts

earlier and earlier each year and that causes a conflict with child labor laws and the Fair. He believes that the school year should start after Labor Day, and if so, the year could end no later than June 10. He suggested that legislation might be needed to make a student's absence from school to exhibit a 4-H project at the Fair an excused absence, as is done with service as a page for the Indiana General Assembly. A discussion ensued concerning the length of the school day and the school year in general. Senator Young suggested that the Committee consider a resolution for an interim committee concerning the starting and ending dates of the school year. Representative Pond would like the Indiana State Teacher's Association's input on this issue and Representative Battles raised his concern with setting mandates on the local school districts. He believes that there may be some pay issues to consider and urged the assistance of the State Board of Accounts. Senator Young moved, and Representative Pond seconded, that the Committee propose a resolution during the 2009 session to establish an interim committee to study the issue of adjusting the dates of the school year, and how that would affect other issues of concern. The motion passed by voice vote. The attorney for the Committee was directed to prepare the resolution for the next meeting of the Committee.

4. Next Meeting Date

Chairperson Merritt set the second meeting of the Committee for 9:00 a.m. on October 9, 2008 in the Board Room of the Administration Building of the Indiana State Fairgrounds, 1202 E. 38th Street, Indianapolis, Indiana.

There being no more business before the Committee, Chairperson Merritt declared the meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.